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Celebrate National Public Health Week April 1-7
Public Health is ROI: Save Money. Save Lives.

2013 County Health Rankings Detail Health Disparities in the Healthiest State

ST. JOHNSBURY – Vermont has been ranked #1 healthiest in *America's Health Rankings* for many years in a row. But Vermonters are not equally healthy, as reported in the latest *County Health Rankings* by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Now available at www.countyhealthrankings.org, the 2013 report ranks Chittenden County as the healthiest in the state, and Essex and Orleans Counties as least healthy. The rankings are based on health outcomes – length of life and quality of life – and health factors such as smoking, alcohol use, physical activity, access to quality health care, income, education, employment and the built environment.

“There are communities in our region who struggle with health factors that are not as prominent in other parts of the state,” said Kathrin Lawlor, director for the St. Johnsbury district office of the Health Department.

A local coalition recently worked with Springfield College policy makers to make the campus smoke free, except for a few designated areas.

“Public Health is a collaborative effort. By working with community partners to find solutions we are able to better respond to the needs of our community and help secure their role in the process,” Lawlor said.

Among the findings in the 2013 *County Health Rankings*:

- 13% of adults in Caledonia County and 18% of adults in Essex County report poor or fair health, compared to 8% of adults in Chittenden County.
- 18% of adults in Caledonia County and 30% of adults in Essex County smoke, compared to 12% in Chittenden County.
- 22% of adults in Caledonia County and 25% of adults in Essex County report they are physically inactive, compared to 15% in Chittenden County.
- 2% report limited access to healthy foods in Caledonia County, compared to 12% in Essex County and 4% in Chittenden County.

The *County Health Rankings* rank the overall health of nearly every county in all 50 states. Nationally, the data revealed that unhealthy counties have more than twice the rate of premature deaths than healthy ones and childhood poverty rates are twice as high in unhealthy counties. The *Rankings* allow counties to see how they compare to other counties within the state based on a range of factors that influence health.

Celebrate Health during National Public Health Week

During National Public Health Week April 1-7, the Vermont Department of Health will highlight the daily work of public health, and will launch *Healthy Vermonters 2020* – the state health assessment that documents the health status of Vermonters at the start of the decade, and sets the goals that will guide the work of public health through 2020.

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